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SF 620 The Spiritual Life of the Minister

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SF 620 The Spiritual Life of the Minister

Spring 2001

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Introduction

This course connects Christian spiritual formation to the vocation of ordained ministry. Using scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as the matrix for exploration, the course focuses upon the personal identity and professional functioning of the clergyperson. The goal of the course is to help students face the opportunities and the challenges of the ministry with the foundation of a sound spiritual life.

Textbooks and Collateral Reading

Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (Crossroad, 1989)

Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor* (Word, 1989)

Warren Wiersbe, *On Being a Servant of God* (Baker, 1993)

A fourth "textbook" is to be selected from one of the following classics, and ordered through whatever means you choose to procure the book...

Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*

John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*

Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*

Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*

Evelyn Underhill, *Concerning the Inner Life*

Additional pages of collateral reading are designed to expand your knowledge and experience of the subject. You are encouraged to use the collateral texts to expose you to such things as....

...classical writings

...authors of both genders

...traditions other than your own

...topics of special interest to you

In your collateral reading, remember the presence and value of periodical and journal articles, material on the internet, and bibliographic/footnote references in the main texts of the course. Depending on the grade covenant you choose, the following page requirements apply to the collateral reading...

600 pages in an "A" covenant

400 pages in a "B" covenant

200 pages in a "C" covenant

Course Objectives

1. You will acquire knowledge about...
 - ...a theology of the spiritual life applied to the vocation of clergy
 - ...the intersection point between the "personal" and "professional"
 - ...a style of ministry that will equip you for the long haul
 - ...what others value in fostering an authentic spirituality for ministry
2. You will develop skills in...
 - ...fostering the character of a virtuous clergyperson
 - ...functioning as a spiritual leader
 - ...living in the ministry as a servant of God
 - ...developing a contemplative lifestyle in the midst of your ministry
3. You are encouraged to deepen your life in Christ by...
 - ...participating in the "Direction in Common" model of the class
 - ...reflecting in the course through the "Missional Learning" approach
 - ...pursuing matters of personal interest and/or need in your journey
 - ...using the means of grace

Class Structure

The course follows the general contours of the "Direction in Common" model designed by Fr. Adrian Van Kaam and Dr. Susan Muto (see attachment). As such, the class is intended to become a covenant group, acknowledging that spiritual formation occurs in the context of Christian community.

Grading System

Grading will be on the basis of a "covenant" developed by you in consultation with Dr. Harper....taking into account such things as your interest level in the course, the blend of this course with others you are taking at the same time, your vocational goals, the actual life circumstances you are facing at the moment, etc. You may expect to receive the contracted grade, assuming your work is done with graduate-level quality. Within the agreed-upon grade level, Dr. Harper reserves the right to assign a "plus" or a "minus" in keeping with his evaluation of your submitted material. **(Note: because our grading system does not have an A+, Dr. Harper reserves the grade of "A" for the finest work submitted for the course, usually ascribing an A- to other work within the A-level covenant).** Accordingly, the following requirements fulfill each of the grade covenant levels:

C-Covenant...

1. read all textbooks
2. read collateral and write reflections on each
3. attend all class sessions
4. conduct the interview

B-Covenant...

1. everything required for the C-Level
2. "formative paper" **OR** "creative project"

A-Covenant...

1. everything required for "C" and "B" Levels
2. "formative paper" **AND** "creative project"

Requirements and Submission Dates

1. Assigned Readings...
---textbooks are read according to the weekly guide
---collateral reflections are due _____
2. Ministry Interview...
---to be turned in on _____
3. Formative Paper...
---to be turned in on _____
4. Creative Project...
---to be turned in on _____

Weekly Course Schedule

(Note: readings for each date are to be completed before the class session)

February 8....Orientation & "Ministry as a Dangerous Vocation"
Peterson: essay handout

February 15...."And Some Apostles..."
Wiersbe: Foreword, Introduction, & Chs. 1-5

February 22...."Spiritual Leadership--1"
Nouwen: Prologue, Introduction, & Ch. 1

March 1...."Spiritual Leadership--2"
Nouwen: Chs. 2, 3; Conclusion & Epilogue

March 8..."The Soul of Ministry"
Anderson: essay handout
Peterson: Introduction

March 15....Spring Break

March 22...."The Spirit of Ministry--1"
Peterson: Chs. 1-4

March 29...."The Spirit of Ministry--2"
Peterson: Chs. 5-9

April 5...."The Spirit of Ministry--3"
Peterson: Chs. 10-13

April 12...."The Services of Ministry--1"
Wiersbe: Chs. 6-11

April 19...."The Services of Ministry--2"
Wiersbe: Chs. 12-20

April 26...."The Services of Ministry--3"
Wiersbe: Chs. 21-30

May 3....Guided Retreat Experience

May 10...."Spiritual Life of the Minister"

For Further Reading and Research

Dr. Harper will distribute a bibliographic guide to help you move farther into the subject matter of this course.